

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please **AMEND** claims 1-4 as shown below.

Please **ADD** new claims 5-7 as shown below.

1. (Currently Amended) A method of operating a frequency hopping spread spectrum, comprising a central node and a plurality of dependent nodes which configured to communicate over a time division duplexed[[,]] frequency hopping channel, a plurality of alternate time-wise frequency/time slots being allocated for central node and dependent node transmission, wherein a first of said dependent node nodes is not permitted to transmit in a frequency/time slot which immediately succeeds, time-wise, a frequency/time slot in which the central node is configured to transmit transmitted to another a second of said dependent node, nodes, comprising: the steps of:

~~the central node~~

maintaining a black-list of worse-performing frequency bands for the time division duplexed frequency hopping in the channel;[[,]] and

transmitting a dummy packet in a frequency/time slot immediately preceding, time-wise, a frequency/time slot allocated for a possible dependent node transmission at a black-listed frequency band which is black-listed to prevent dependent node transmission at the black-listed frequency band.

2. (Currently Amended) A method ~~as in~~ of claim 1, wherein the central node refrains from transmitting ~~on in a black-listed~~ frequency/time slot of a black-listed frequency band.

3. (Currently Amended) A Bluetooth node, comprising:
maintaining means for maintaining a black-list of worse-performing frequency bands; $[[,]]$ and

transmitting means for transmitting a dummy packet in a frequency/time slot immediately preceding, time-wise, a frequency/time slot allocated for a possible slave node transmission at a black-listed frequency band ~~which is black-listed~~.

4. (Currently Amended) A Bluetooth node ~~as in~~ of claim 3, further comprising:
refraining means for refraining from transmitting ~~on in a given~~ frequency/time slot of the ~~on the basis of the black-listed~~ frequency band.

5. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of maintaining a black-list of worse-performing frequency bands further comprises determining the black-list of worse-performing frequency bands based upon a probability of error-free transmission between the central node and a dependent node.

6. (New) A Bluetooth node, comprising:

a master node configured to maintain a black-list of worse-performing frequency bands for a time division duplexed frequency hopping channel; and

a plurality of dependent nodes configured to communicate with the master node over the time division duplexed frequency hopping channel in a plurality of alternate time-wise frequency/time slots,

wherein the master node is further configured to transmit a dummy packet in a first frequency/time slot immediately preceding, time-wise, a second frequency/time slot allocated for a dependent node transmission at a black-listed frequency band.

7. (New) A Bluetooth node of claim 6, wherein the master node is further configured to refrain from transmitting in a frequency/time slot of the black-listed frequency band.